

Spy Comes In From Cold-In Despair

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WASHINGTON — One of America's brightest young spies, an earnest, committed professional who says he ran clandestine operations on four continents in the past decade, has resigned in disgust from the CIA.

"The CIA is paralyzed," he charges. "They are laughing at us in Moscow and Havana. Even our friends don't trust us anymore. I quit because I could no longer do my job."

The spy is Mike Ackerman, a 34-year-old Miamian who writes commentaries on classical Judaism in his spare time and is "more afraid of the Soviet Union than anything else on earth."

He charges the CIA has been undermined by its own mistakes, by adventurist politicians, by a lack of cooperation on the part of other government agencies, by elements in the American press that have sacrificed national interest for sensationalism, and by an American public indifferent to the needs of a professional intelligence service.

"You can't run an intelligence agency in a goldfish bowl..."

—Mike Ackerman, spy

"YOU CAN'T RUN an intelligence agency in a goldfish bowl, it is as simple as that."

For four years, Ackerman says he traveled widely, mostly in Latin America, as a lone-wolf spy based in Miami.

Since 1964, he says, he has car-

ried out clandestine operations in 20 countries — 12 in the Western Hemisphere, three in Africa and five in Europe.

Ackerman says he had two specialties: covert political action and the clandestine development of intelligence from Communist sources.

In collecting intelligence, he says, he was most often targeted against Russians and Cubans.

ACKERMAN RESIGNED May 30 after 11 years as a case officer in the CIA's Clandestine Services. His rank, GS-14, is about equivalent to

that of a lieutenant colonel. He was among the youngest officers in the CIA to hold it, according to a CIA spokesman who confirmed his employment and resignation.

Ackerman has not gone public to tell sensational stories; he says he will not violate confidences. His goal is to make himself credible and to make credible his contention that a vital safeguard to American security is being destroyed by what he calls "a hostile political climate in the United States."

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Ackerman says the CIA has lost its effectiveness.

"If I were a Russian today and had to talk to somebody I would go see MI-6 (British intelligence) or the Mossad (Israeli intelligence). That would not have been true a few years ago."

IN HIS FRUSTRATION, Ackerman believes he speaks not only for himself but also for other professional intelligence officers of his generation whose personal circumstances do not allow them to speak publicly. He feels they are paying for mistakes made by another generation of intelligence officers.

Ackerman says the CIA has not acted above reproach.

- "It has conducted illegal domestic operations in violation of its charter.

- "It has sponsored massive paramilitary operations, such as the Bay of Pigs and the 'secret' Laotian war. Those adventures could not have been carried out clandestinely. They should not have been undertaken by a clandestine service.

- "It has, I fear, played a role that is not as yet clearly defined, in the planning of political assassinations. An American intelligence service has no business planning assassinations. This is what my generation of intelligence officers was taught. This is what I believe."

Ackerman said he had been taught that the CIA never condoned, participated in or supported assassination attempts.

He said assassinations had been suggested by foreign contacts three times during his career but he had rebuffed all the suggestions.

Ackerman added that when the reports first began to surface he expected a strong, and quick, denial from the agency. When that denial was not forthcoming, his concern with the agency turned to despair.

Reports of liaison contact with the Mafia are also alarming. Neither has the CIA any business consorting with organized crime. It is not only distasteful. It also violates the most basic standards of professionalism. And it is an unforgivable insult to every case officer who has ever produced intelligence on the international drug traffic."

Ackerman says he makes no excuses for the CIA's failings but he does offer some "reasons."

"In fairness, it must be noted that the CIA is a young institution. When it was created in 1947, it had little precedent in American history," Ackerman said in beginning his explanation.

"At first it was staffed largely by survivors of the swashbuckling OSS. These were men who had come to the intelligence profession by the accident of World War II. They learned their trade fast and loose in no-holds-barred combat.

"Some of the OSS veterans matured into first-rate intelligence officers in peacetime. Some of them never stopped being cowboys. These are the men who ran the CIA, who executed the Bay of Pigs and reportedly contemplated assassinations.

"**MOST OF THEM** are retired now. But their ghosts linger to haunt the generation of professional intelligence officers that is rising to decision-making positions within the agency. The new generation is to the OSS as physicists are to alchemists.

"Another point worth remembering is that the CIA is not, as it is often pictured, a malevolent, self-directing institution. On major issues, it takes its orders directly from the President of the United States and the National Security Council.

"If the CIA has made mistakes, so have its accusers."

And Ackerman doesn't have much good to say about the two investigations of the CIA being carried out in Congress.

"HOW DOES AN intelligence agency maintain credibility when there are two congressional committees tramping through its headquarters on what amounts to a fishing expedition?"

The former spy takes particular aim at the way the press has handled the developing CIA story.

"Why is the press so gleefully ready to attack with malice anything which bears, legitimately or otherwise, the cloak of national security?

"To be frank, most of what I have read in the American press about the CIA is garbage. Kernels of information are distorted and puffed up until they bear no relation to the facts.

"It sometimes seems to be as though every two-bit hustler who ever shoplifted a spy novel can claim today to have been a CIA agent and get his name in the

paper. Many of these self-confessed CIA experts wouldn't know an intelligence operation from chopped liver."

IN THE TRADE, Ackerman was known as a "street man," slang for that small number of front-line spies who think on their feet, usually work alone and are at home in the back alley world where intelligence is bought and sold.

He will acknowledge by name only two countries where he served: the Dominican Republic and Guyana. His service there under embassy cover is recorded in government documents available to the general public.

Today's CIA can no longer effectively carry out either clandestine intelligence gathering or covert political action, he says.

"I decided to quit the day I met secretly with a Communist source who was risking his life to see me and I realized I could not guarantee his security.

"There was no way I could promise him that some irresponsible member of Congress or ex-employee wouldn't leak his information or that some reporter wouldn't blab it all over the front page.

"That is the recent record. And that is a national tragedy."

In a lengthy series of interviews Ackerman emerged as hawkish, articulate, intelligent, somewhat rigid and entirely righteous in his convictions. He is both tense and intense.

THE SON OF an immigrant Russian Jew he is profoundly religious. He is a graduate of Dartmouth (magna cum laude) and earned a master's in political science at Columbia University before joining the CIA.

His future plans are uncertain. He has about \$10,000 in pension fund money from the government and some \$4,000 paid for unused leave time. Initially, at least, he will seek public forums to make his views known.

Ackerman anticipates he may have a credibility problem.

"The cynics will no doubt conclude that this is a CIA operation. It isn't. It's my operation. And anybody who listens to what I have to say will quickly discover there is nobody in the world who would sponsor bullheaded Mike Ackerman but me."

ACKERMAN DOES NOT smoke, and he drinks little, although he is an expert handicapper of Miami singles' bars. In one of them he was once overwhelmed for the attentions of a girl by a competitor who told lurid stories of his career as a CIA agent.

Ackerman's entire CIA career was spent in the Clandestine Services, which is known officially as the Deputy Directorate of Operations, and is sometimes referred to by the media as the "Dirty Tricks Department."

The CS, as Ackerman calls it, runs covert operations and seeks intelligence from human sources. It is the most elite, the most secret and one of the smallest divisions of the CIA, most of whose work deals with intelligence analysis from technical journals and the products of electronic and photographic espionage.

A colleague, once writing a physical description of Ackerman, noted playfully: "apt to have ketchup stains on his tie and sleeves after lunch and dinner."

Keeping his tie straight is not one of those things that most concerns Ackerman.

"THE GREATEST AMERICAN intelligence officer who ever lived was a great, messy, shambling man who looked like Jackie Gleason with a mustache."

The CIA spokesman who ac-

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knowledged Ackerman's service
said he had left the service "in the
highest repute."

A high CIA executive, who has
been publicly identified as such but
prefers to remain anonymous in
this instance, evaluated Ackerman
this way:

"HE GETS EXTREMELY high
marks for intellect and imagination

and high marks for dedication. I
rank him in the top 3 per cent
among his peers in performance
and in the top 10 per cent overall."

For the first part of his career,
Ackerman says he was a specialist
in covert action operations: He
helped break Communist-led
strikes, he funneled money to the
publisher of a moderate newspaper

under attack; he helped a Democratic
faction ward off a Communist
takeover of its political party.

"My specialty was the fast pitch:
to meet a source, try to establish a
relationship and then pitch him. I
am a representative of U.S. intelligence
and I think there are compelling
reasons why you should cooperate with us."

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